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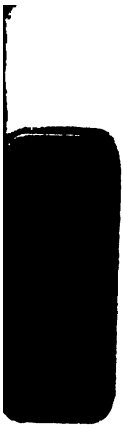

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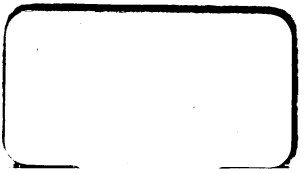

WORKS BY 'Q'

DEAD MAN'S ROCK

TROY TOWN

THE SPLENDID SPUR

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

THE BLUE PAVILIONS

I SAW THREE SHIPS

THE WARWICKSHIRE AVON

THE DELECTABLE DUCHY

GREEN BAYS: VERSES AND PARODIES

THE GOLDEN POMP

WANDERING HEATH

IA

ADVENTURES IN CRITICISM

POEMS AND BALLADS

POEMS
AND BALLADS BY
'Q'

Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch

LONDON
METHUEN AND CO.
36 ESSEX STREET
1896

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1896

SEVERAL of the numbers in this volume have made their first appearance elsewhere; some in *The Speaker*, others in *The Pall Mall Magazine*, others in certain works of fiction published by Messrs. Cassell and Company. Two—*The Splendid Spur* and *The White Moth*—I have taken leave to reprint from a previous volume of verse (*Green Bays: Verses and Parodies*, 1893), and set here in more suitable company. I here acknowledge my indebtedness to the editors and publishers concerned. Q.

1287861-190

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UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE

Now winds of winter glue
  Their tears upon the thorn,
And earth has voices few,
  And those forlorn.

And 'tis our solemn night
  When maidens sand the porch,
And play at *Jack's Alight*
  With burning torch,

Or cards, or *Kiss i' the Ring*—
  While ashen fagots blaze,
And late wassailers sing
  In miry ways.

Then, dear my wife, be blithe
  To bid the New Year hail,
And welcome—plough, drill, scythe,
  And jolly flail.

For though the snows he 'll shake
  Of winter from his head,
To settle, flake by flake,
  On ours instead;

Yet we be wreathèd green
  Beyond his blight or chill,
Who kissed at seventeen,
  And worship still.

We know not what he 'll bring:
  But this we know to-night—
He doth prepare the Spring
  For our delight.

UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE

With birds he 'll comfort us,
  With blossoms, balms, and bees,
With brooks, and odorous
  Wild breath o' the breeze.

Come then, O festal prime !
  With sweets thy bosom fill,
And dance it, dripping thyme,
  On Lantick hill.

West wind, awake ! and comb
  Our garden, blade from blade—
We, in our little home,
  Sit unafraid.

SABINA

THE stair was steep; the Tower was tall;
  Sabina's strength was gone:
She leaned a hand against the wall,
  And let her boy run on.

High in the blue the Old Tower swayed
  His bells to the sunset breeze:
But ever like hemlock climbed the shade
  Of earth on his earth-hewn knees.

The Widow watched the red sun's glow
  Steal up by the window's edge;
She saw the darkened green below,
  And the wan sheep by the hedge.

'Child! Child!' she called, and 'Wait for me!'
But ever the boy's feet ran;
And up through the Whisp'ring Gallery
Came the voice of her dead man—

'He will not turn for any prayer,
Nor pause for any tear:
The winds of God harp down the stair,
Their pinnacle notes ring clear.'

She said, 'My pulse runs low and low:
He has leapt inside of me.
Blood of my blood, shall he not know
My blood's necessity?'

The dead man said, 'He will not wait.
High in a naked room
A maiden listens, strong as fate,
And selfish as the tomb.

'Her sisters, as they cross the floor,
  Throw glances at the clock:
Her father fumbles with the door,
  He knows he may not lock:

'Her mother pins the bridal crown,
  And pricks her trembling thumbs:
But the bride has laid her mirror down,
  Her small foot drums and drums.

'A minute—hark! Ah joy, ah joy!
  The helpless door falls wide,
The harp of God and the laugh of a boy
  Sing aubade to the bride.

'The bride she rises from her chair—
  Now never stretch your hands!
The harp, the voice, the climbing stair—
  Naught else she understands.

'Follow the harp, take hands and run!
High on the shining leads,
Or ever a midsummer night's begun
The swallow twitters her orison
By the granite martyrs' heads!'

'Dead man, we too have kissed and climbed.
Inert you moulder there,
And here I fail and flutter, limed
Fast on the middle stair.

'Sure as upon the still-drawn east
The evening arch invades;
Sure as we hold a green earth leased
Briefly between two shades;

They will not reach,'
'But they will run,
And hand in hand admire
Through loftier panes an ampler sun,
List a diviner choir:

'Other horizons, widening slopes—
  Yet not a blossom there
But gat its increase from the hopes
  We two were used to share!

'Woman, consign you with the years;
  Consign and follow me.
What though the sun shine on our tears,
  If he the rainbow see?'

The stair was steep; the Tower was tall;
  Sabina's strength was gone:
She bowed her face unto the wall,
  And let her boy run on.

DOOM FERRY

BOATMAN, have they crossed? 'Not all:
The inn, there, hath an upper chamber,
And a window in the wall
Where the small white roses clamber.

'Many shelves run round the room;
On a shelf, and no man near them,
Two are talking low i' the gloom—
From the trellis' foot may'st hear them.'

Who are they? 'At dawn they came
By the Passage, calling *Over!*
She the corpse of a comely dame,
And the man, methinks, her lover.'

Boatman, land and climb the stair:
  By the scented window-boxes
Lower me that loving pair
  Here among the crimson phloxes.

Boatman, is this honey-dew
  Dripping from the window-boxes?
Nay, I cannot tell its hue
  Here against the crimson phloxes.

Take a guinea and a groat:
  One in ale shall keep thee merry;
Let the other fee the boat
  Tiding these across the ferry.

Take this purse: it shall persuade
  Him who digs i' th' acre yonder
Them to bed with a cunning spade
  Cheek by jowl, no turtles fonder.

DOOM FERRY

Cheek by jowl, and heart by heart,
  But a thought in either buried,
That shall push them wide apart—
  Wide enough ere a third be ferried.

So, between, my body I 'll thrust,
  Laughing, straightening out my knees there,
Either hand in a little dust
  Dabbling, at my cool dead ease there.

A HOUSEKEEPING

Surprised by young desire, as by the dawn,
A young Orion, wildered, half awake,
Bedraggled, drenched in woodland ways withdrawn,
My heart, a-tiptoe by a dewy brake,
Spied the gods sleeping—vision of green lawn,
Pale ivory limbs, pillows of dappled fawn,
And a great quiet, and a stilly lake.

There the long grasses topped a banquet spread
—For that the turf had been their only table—
With cates and fruit and delicate white bread,
Roses a-float in craters carved with fable.
There droop'd a wreath from each relaxèd head,
And there on garland and on god were shed
The coverlet of years innumerable.

A HOUSEKEEPING

They perish not, beneath the secular oak—
  Olympian Jove and all his greenwood train:
And yet no breath heaves any purple cloak;
  Yet the thin leaves list on their lips in vain;
    In vain the veils of morning, like a smoke,
    Shake with the spiral lark. Be whist, invoke—
      They perish not, yet will not live again.

Anon upon that lake a shudder swept,
  And therewithal a feeble childish wail;
And lo! a naked wingèd babe that stepped
  Shoreward atween the weed and galingale,
    And sought the whitest queen of all, and crept
    Close to her side, and clapped her cheek, and wept,
      And coaxed her ear with many an elfin tale.

'Mother, awake! The Western Wind arrives!
  Down the long gulf he breaks a wavering stair
For Phœbus' gilded feet, and shoreward drives,

And sings across the meadows, debonair,
Pelting the Heaven with dust of golden hives,
Blown saffron bloom, and small birds with their wives,
And happiness in handfuls everywhere.

'Late as I couched high on the Latmian cliff,
I heard the red pine whisper wakefully;
I saw the pasturing brood-mare pause and sniff
The salt newcomer; and with mainsail free
A helmsman hailed me from his bobbing skiff—
'Praise the West Wind!' How shall I praise him, if,
If, Cytherea, he awake not thee?

'He may adorn the day; but ah! the dark—
The dark destroys me! When the shepherds fold
And hie them, each to his confederate spark,
His window lit, his beacon on the wold,

Then lie they warm. But me the house-dog's bark
Drives houseless, quaking through the midnight
park:
All creatures love, but Love himself's a-cold!'

Thereat I stepped and gently him bespake—
'Dear child, my cottage hath an empty room,
A flask of thin wine and an oaten cake.
She, an she wake, will thank me—She, for whom
Kings left their loves, them blithely to betake
To war, the while that for her lovely sake
Wild War himself laid by his lance and plume.'

Then first he started back a little space;
But after came and laid a hand in mine,
As glad of one that spake his mother's praise.
So forth we fared: and happy our design,
Till *thou* cam'st fluttering through the forest ways,
Thou, with the woodland sunburn on thy face,
Thou, in green kirtle pinned with eglantine.

'Hillo!' criedst thou, 'what darling leadest there?
Come, pretty chuck!'—and heaped him kiss on kiss.
'An orphan? Save thee from his mannish care!
Fond foundling, say, what do men know of this?'
'But he is mine,' said I; 'unless thou share—'
'If thou,' she falter'd, 'hast but room to spare—'
Fool, fool, fool heart! sub-letting so thy bliss!

Thenceforward for a month, as shines in Lent
The mead with daffodils, my cottage shone
With days and nights-made-noonday, being spent
In serving him that first had made us one.
And then, as droop in April's discontent
Those daffodils, thy will declined, and went
Forth from my door, leaving us there alone.

Ah, had we never met—or, having met,
Had I been wiser or thy heart less wild!

For, wanting thee, at first he 'gan to fret,
And then to hunger as a weaning child:
And perished, wanting thee. And yet—and yet—
Hadst thou but turned or showed the least regret,
How had he waked, and stretched his arms, and smiled!

SHADOWS

As I walked out on Hallows' E'en,
I saw the moon swing thin and green;
I saw beside, in Fiddler's Wynd,
Two hands that moved upon a blind.

As I walked out on Martin's Feast,
I heard a woman say to a priest—
'His grave is digged, his shroud is sewn;
And the child shall pass for his very own.'

But whiles they stood beside his tomb,
I heard the babe laugh out in her womb—
'My hair will be black as his was red,
And I have a mole where his heart bled.'

THE MASQUER IN THE STREET

Masquer on the rainy stones,
  Jigging, twirling 'neath the rain,
Wherefore shake thine aged bones
    To that antique strain?

Limp thy locks and lank and thinned,
  Thy grey beard it floats a yard;
And thy coat tails flap i' the wind
    Like a torn placard.

'Hush!' saith he; 'there was a House—
  From its porch the cressets flared;
Lads in livery called "Carouse!
    For thy lust's prepared!"

'Like a snake the prelude wound—
Crash! the merry waltz began:
One unto my mind I found,
And our feet ran.

'Rubies ripped from altar-cloths
Leered adown her silk attire;
Her mad shoes were scarlet moths
In a rose of fire.

'Tropic scents her tresses weaved—
Scents to lay the soul a-swoon;
On her breast the draperies heaved
Like clouds by the moon.

'Back she bent her throat, her wet
Southern lips, and dared, and dared—
Over them my kisses met,
While the saxe-horn blared.

THE MASQUER IN THE STREET

'Crash! the brassy cymbal smote—
When I would have stayed our feet,
Laughter rippled all her throat
Like a wind on wheat.

'Every laugh it left a crease,
Every ripple wrote her old—
Yet her arms would not release,
Nor her feet with-hold.

'Ah! to watch it suck and sag—
Rosy flesh 'had breathed so warm—
Till I twirled a loveless hag
On a tortured arm!

'Dancers, resting for a while
Down the wall with faces white,
Watched us waltzing, mile on mile,
In a horror of light!'

Masquer on the rainy stones,
What is that thy fingers fold?
'Dead or dying, naught atones
But I dance and hold.

'Crash! the maddened cymbal smote—
Are they minutes? Are they years,
That I hold but dust to my coat
And a few gold hairs?'

Masquer in the rainy close,
God thee pity and thy bone!
Other men have danced with those,
And now dance alone.

DOLOR OOGO

THIRTEEN men by Ruan Shore,
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Drownèd men since 'eighty-four,
Down in Dolor Oogo:
On the cliff against the sky,
Ailsa, wife of Malachi—
That cold woman—
Sits and knits eternally.

By her silent husband's side
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Stretched awake, she hears the tide
Moan in Dolor Oogo:

Till athwart the easter gale
Hark! the merry dead men hail—
'Thou cold woman,
Take the lantern from the nail!'

Rising in her chilly sark
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Forth she fares by Behan Parc,
Out to Dolor Oogo:
Kneeling there above the brink,
Lets her long red tresses sink
—That cold woman—
For the sailor men to drink.

Then the sailor men beneath
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Take the ends between their teeth,
Deep in Dolor Oogo.

DOLOR OOGO

'Lusty blood is this to quaff:
(So the merry dead men laugh)
O, cold woman,
Hath thy man as good by half?'

'Drownèd men by Ruan Shore
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Lost aboard the *Elsinore*
Down by Dolor Oogo—
If the gulls behind the share
Yesterday had called "Beware,
Thy cold woman!"
Paler now had been my hair.

'Socks I knit you each a pair
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Half of yarn and half of hair,
Over Dolor Oogo.'

'Dripping, dripping on the tide,
What red dye thy hair hath dyed,
Thou cold woman?'
'It hath brushed upon his side.'

Knitting with her double thread
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Half of black and half of red—
Over Dolor Oogo,
On the cliff against the sky,
Ailsa, wife of Malachi,
That cold woman,
Wipes her hands incessantly.

ODE

UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

I

O PASTORAL heart of England! like a psalm
  Of green days telling with a quiet beat—
O wave into the sunset flowing calm!
  O tirèd lark descending on the wheat!
Lies it all peace beyond that western fold
  Where now the lingering shepherd sees his star
Rise upon Malvern? Paints an Age of Gold
    Yon cloud with prophecies of linkèd ease—
    Lulling this Land, with hills drawn up like knees,
  To drowse beside her implements of war?

II

Man shall outlast his battles. They have swept
  Avon from Naseby Field to Severn Ham;
And Evesham's dedicated stones have stepped
  Down to the dust with Montfort's oriflamme.
Nor the red tear nor the reflected tower
  Abides; but yet these eloquent grooves remain
Worn in the sandstone parapet hour by hour
    By labouring bargemen where they shifted ropes.
    E'en so shall man turn back from violent hopes
  To Adam's cheer, and toil with spade again.

III

Ay, and his mother Nature, to whose lap
  Like a repentant child at length he hies,
Not in the whirlwind or the thunder-clap
  Proclaims her more tremendous mysteries:
But when in winter's grave, bereft of light,

UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

With still, small voice divinelier whispering
—Lifting the green head of the aconite,
Feeding with sap of hope the hazel-shoot—
She feels God's finger active at the root,
Turns in her sleep, and murmurs of the Spring.

SONNET

ISLES OF SCILLY

I saw Narcissus in a portico
  Leaning his ear toward the yellow bells
  Of his own flower, festooned, that from the shells
Voluted, on the pavement, caught the low
Long echoes of an Archipelago
  Afar, beyond the pillared parallels
  Wherein a soft wind wound, and nothing else,
Between his shoulder and the afterglow.

Figure of bronze! Thou listenest alway:
  Ever for thee that lazy song beguiles.
But I must wake, and toil again, and pray;
  And yet will come but rarely, and at whiles,
The shout and vision of the sea-gods grey,
  Stampeding by of the lone Scillonian isles.

VICTORIA

(JUNE 22ND, 1893)

'There was absolutely no panic, no shouting, no rushing aimlessly about. The officers went quietly to their stations. Everything was prepared, and the men were all in their positions. . . . I can further testify to the men below in the engine-rooms. . . . In all the details of this terrible accident one spot especially stands out, and that is the heroic conduct of those who to the end remained below, stolidly yet boldly, at their place of duty.'—*Captain Bourke's Statement.*

QUEEN! What is this that comes
Borne on thy rolling drums
At sunrise from the far
Syrian borders?
—Sped from the flags that fly
Half-mast at Tripoli,
Where float the ships of war,
Thy virgin warders?

Where tarries she who should
Captain that sisterhood,
  Named with thy name, and own
    Offspring of Victory?
Deep, eighty fathoms deep,
She, with her crew asleep,
  Recks not the signal flown,
    Vain, valedictory.

Not in Thy day of wrath,
Lord God of Sabaoth,
  Nor upon rock or sand
    Hemmed with Thy breath round;
But leading tranquilly
Upon a tranquil sea,
  Swift at a sister's hand
    Took she her death-wound.

Launched on the fatal curve,
Too late to stay or swerve,
  Starkly the *Camperdown*
    Rounded, descended,
Struck—saw, and backward reeled,
As he who on the field
  By Oxus smote his own
    Sohrab, the splendid.

But She, the stricken hull,
The doomed, the beautiful,
  Proudly to fate abased
    Her brow Titanic.
Praise now her multitude
Who, nursed in fortitude,
  Fell in on deck and faced
    Death without panic.

Heaven, that to admirals,
Assigns their funerals,
To some the battle's ridge
Full-starred, to die on—
Took not the spirit proud
From him she less allowed.
—Calm, cool, upon the bridge,
Sank the brave Tryon !

Now for the seamen whom
Thy not degenerate womb
Gave thus to die for thee,
England, be tearless :
Rise, and with front serene
Answer, thou Spartan queen,
'Still God is good to me :
My sons are fearless.'

VICTORIA

Back to the flags that fly
Half-mast at Tripoli,
  Back on the sullen drum
    Mourning *Victoria,*
Loud, ay, and jubilant,
Hurl thine imperial chant—
  'In morte talium
    Stat Matris gloria!

THE SPLENDID SPUR

Nor on the neck of prince or hound,
Nor on a woman's finger twined,
May gold from the deriding ground
Keep sacred that we sacred bind:
Only the heel
Of splendid steel
Shall stand secure on sliding fate,
When golden navies weep their freight.

THE SPLENDID SPUR

The scarlet hat, the laurelled stave,
Are measures, not the springs of worth;
In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
Man's airy notions mix with earth.
Seek other spur
Bravely to stir
The dust in this loud world, and tread
An Alp among the whisp'ring dead.

Trust in thyself,—then spur amain:
So shall Charybdis wear a grace,
Grim Ætna laugh, the Libyan plain
Take roses to her shrivelled face.
This orb—this round
Of sight and sound—
Count it the lists that God hath built
For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt.

THE COMRADE

STRANGER by the tavern board,
  Brown man with the splendid eyne,
Thou and I make no accord
  Till thou give the countersign
  Here, across the Rhenish wine.

I had word in Trebizond
  Of thy favours to my blood,
Of my father's cancelled bond,
  Why his widow lacked not food:
  Truly I believe thee good.

Well I know my mother's lips
  Called thee kinder than her Own
In those months my wandered ships,
  Fouler than this red beard grown,
  Wallowed in a raving zone.

THE COMRADE

'Needs no token round thy neck !—
  Over desert's dusky white,
When the frosted quarter-deck
  Shivered back the Northern Light
  Through the aching Arctic night;

By the coral-locked lagoon,
  While upon the seamless blue
Like a silver clasp, the moon
  Drew the gauzèd night, wherethrough
  Her two horns dripped honey-dew;

Thine the face that, first and last,
  Haunted me. For thee I scanned
Passing deck and distant mast,
  Peep of dawn and lift of land.
  Now we meet—hold back thy hand!

Though thou smilest by the board,
  And our fingers itch to twine,

Thou and I make no accord
  Till I have the countersign
  Here, across the Rhenish wine.

He that loves but half of Earth
  Loves but half enough for me.
Succourer of starving Worth,
  Say, but could thy Charity
  Stoop as pitiful a knee,

Hold as equable a torch
  O'er the hell that sinners tread?
Tenderly, in windy porch,
  Lift the drooping harlot's head,
  As the good man's in his bed?

Earth, that built our jolly bones,—
  Earth, that brewed our jovial blood,—
In each atom of us owns

Spark of filial fire that should
Quicken to the parent mood.

Here, astride the paps of Earth,
With the wind upon thy face,
Canst resound thy mother's mirth,
Catch a breath and say a grace
For the glory of the pace?—

Thankful for thy privilege
In the hunter's gallant stride,
In the glancing rapid's edge,
In the waters that divide
To thy nimble, naked pride;

Thankful for the climber's heel
Fast above the smooth ravine,
For the hand-shake of the wheel,
When the giddy royals lean
And the forefoot treads it green;

For the sleep of tirèd limbs,
  For the taste of meat and wine,
For the merry laugh that brims
  Labour as with a froth divine;—
  Pledge me this, and I am thine.

Then to horse!—the gates are wide.
  Host, a cup before we go!
He and I are pledged to ride
  Till the gust of onset blow
  Dead the failing spark; and so,—

Having reached, or failed to reach,
  In no Abbey will we lie,
But upon a league-long beach
  Find the braver cemet'ry,
  Sweetened by the wave and sky.

THE CAPTAIN

THERE is a captain that commands,
  And never but to victory:
'The counsel of thine heart it stands,
  No man so faithful unto thee.'
    Though seven senses watch the wall,
    And all thy courage leap at call,
    He is thine ark and arsenal,
      Thine armour and artillery.

Yea, while the cloakèd sentries tramp
  And challenge with a deep 'All's well!'
He lists the sappers from the camp
  Encroaching on thy citadel;

Invisible he tries the guns,
And leaning o'er the bastions
Discerns the tented legions,
Earthwork and trench and parallel.

O man! in vain they creep and mine;
Thy ramp remains inviolate.
But if by folly or design
Thou force thy friend to abdicate,
A broken pole, a trodden keep,
The standard of thy soul shall weep,
And all her trophies lie a heap
That owls and satyrs desecrate.

COLUMBUS AT SEVILLE

DEAR son, Diego, I am old and deaf:
Here to my room in Seville some one came
— To-day or yesterday, who knows? The blinds
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor—
Here to my room in Seville some one came
And muttered that the queen is dead. I trust
She rests in glory, far from all the cares
Of this rough world she made less penible
For two much-travelled feet that here inert
Wait by the ripple of the Blessed Ford,
Yet may not to its running cool unlace
Until my Master give the happy word.

I have been loyal: flouted for a fool,
I have been loyal: lifted above lords,

I have been loyal : once again abased,
Beggared and led a prisoner in chains,
I have been loyal still. But I believe
God sets on kings His sigil for a test,
And only they who bear it to His bourne
By widows' tears uncancelled, without scratch
Of fetters wrongfully imposed, undimmed
By sighs of just petitioners, may claim
To hear their charter yonder reconfirmed.
Who fails—his province shall another take,
One chosen from the spirits of just men
Made perfect. And his own debt shall every one
Here or hereafter, soon or late, redeem.
Who plights his dignity against a debt,
As Ferdinand ; who thus evades a debt,
As Ferdinand, and forfeits faith of man ;
Shall find that faith confront him by the Throne
In angels' blushes, and his honours melt
For payment in their slow celestial scorn.

But she, my Mistress, diadem of all
His dignity, was never Ferdinand's.
Born of that royal few who ride abroad
And see their humbler, happier sisters throw
Free glances from their windows on the street;
Or by the bridge or by the bathing-pool
Passing with nun-like faces, catch a hint
And bear it home and wonder all the night
Stretched by their lords, listing the serena e
That well by distant balconies passionate;
She—though her priestess' body she abased
Coldly to public need—lent it to wed
Castille with Aragon—was dedicate
To none but duty. On this earth she knew
No passion but a friendship purified,
Unspotted of the flesh, prophetical
Of that sublimer passion of the saints
Her innocence now inherits.—Not for me!
As not for Ferdinand! But this I hope,

To meet her walking 'neath the boughs of Life,
To touch her hand without servility,
And in the salutation of her eyes
Read resolution of the musing care
That clouded them aforetime, half with doubt
And half with pitiful knowledge.

Oh, they swept
Down from the daïs eloquent, wave on wave
In every wave brooded a starry thought;
In every thought brooded a litten tongue,
Holy, with comfortable words. And yet
I have looked into them as a mother looks,
And in the iris of her week-old babe
Reads now but natal innocence, and now
The absorbèd wisdom of an age-worn past
Blinking its own new dawn. They did allow
The wonder of man's weakness, even while
They pierced unto his greatness and the hope

Natheless at first I did believe her cold
—Jesu! She cold!—cold as the icèd rim
'Engaged my hot heart there by Pinos bridge.
Tight-corded as my holster was the bale,
The slender bale of hope I carried then,
If somewhere I might find the world so wide
As to contain one courage bold to mate
With me to push it wider—wide enough
To satisfy the more adventurous clans
Yet in the womb waiting the moment's call.
For Portugal had cheated, England sent
No word, and of Bartholomew no report
Came on the bearded lips of them who drew
Forth from the northern fogs in caravel,
Galley or barque or pinnace. Day by day
For two long years, seated among my books,
Maps, charts, and cross-staves, in the little shop
By Seville bridge, incessant I had watched
The Guadalquiver through a dusty pane;

Had watched the thin mast creep around the point;
Had watched the slow hull warp across the tide,
And the long flank fall lazy to the quay
—Levantine traders bringing Tyrian wine,
Malmsey from Crete, fine lawn of Cyprus, silk
Of Egypt and of India. Genovese,
Whose sheer I conned and knew the shipwright's name,
—Feluccas, with a world of eastern spice
Bartered of Caspian merchants on the bar
Of Poti, or of Emosaïd clans
Down the Red Sea and south to Mozambique:
True aloes of Socotra, galbanum,
Myrrh, cassia, rhubarb, scented calamus,
Sweet storax, cinnamon, attars of the rose
And jasmine. And of some the skippers wore
Skin purses belted underneath their knives
—Spoilers of Ormuz or of Serendib,
Who sought the jeweller's offices ere they slept
Or drank ashore. These from the sunrise all:

But others from the dark and narrow seas
By England and by Flanders. Tin they brought
In blocks and bars, and lead and pewter ware
Shipped at Southampton. Lace and napery
Of Ypres and of Malines, Frankish wools
In bulk from Calais' warehouses, or spun
By English hands, grey kersey, fustian, cloth,
From Guildford, Norwich, London.—

Ay, but none
Brought tidings of Bartholomew. One and all,
Still to my questioning the shipmen stared
And shook their silver earrings: not a word!
Oft—as th' Orcadian watcher from his rock
Scans the grey tide-race eddying by his line—
In tavern corner by an empty cup
I have heard the roboant captains boast and swell;
Alert, if haply, on vainglorious tale
Or outland lie reported, there might drift

Some flotsam of the dim West unexplored.
Bird of my hope! How long ye beat a wing
In yon unfathomable fogs, and still
Of green no sign!—the waters ever void,
And empty the pink feet of Noë's dove!

At Salamanca then they tested us;
Churchmen and schoolmen and cosmogoners
In council. 'Hey!' and 'What?' 'The earth a sphere?
And two ways to Cathaia?' 'Tut and tush!'
'Feared the Cathaians then no blood in the head
From walking upside-down?' 'Pray did I know
Of a ship 'would sail up-hill?' 'Had I not heard
Perchance of latitudes when the wheel of the sun
Kept the sea boiling? Of the tropic point
Where white men turned hop-skip to blackamoors?'
'And hark ye, sir, to what Augustine says,
And here is Cosmas' map. "*God built the world*

As a tabernacle: *sky for roof and sides,*
And earth for flooring . . . Made all men to dwell
Upon the face of it"—the face, you hear,
Not several faces—" *On foundations laid*
The earth abides"—foundations, if you please,
Not mid-air. Soothly, sir, at your conceits
We smile, but warn you that they lie not far
On this side heresy. "Antipodes," hey?
Our Mother Church annuls the Antipodes.'

Fools, fools, Diego! Ay, but folly makes
More orphans than malevolence.
There I stood
Rejected, and the good queen looked on me.
She did not smile. Thank God she did not smile
She did not speak. I saw the mute lips move
Compassionate, and took defeat, went forth.

Nay, no compassion now! With scorn of men
I bound my wound, and nursed it while I rode.

France now, or England? Still the wound complained,
And still I closed the purple lips with scorn;
Till there on Pinos bridge my horses hoof
Rang, and the vaulted echo halloa'd 'Scorn!'
And so—

I do remember, on a time,
Off Cape St. Vincent in a general fight,
How that one master of a sinking hull
—An Antwerp captain—danced about his deck
Like paper in a gale, and cursed and bawled,
And cursed again and shook his fist and bawled,
Belabouring his gunners—fat and fierce
As a fool's bladder, wholly ludicrous;
Till running to the bulwarks, all aflush
To hurl some late-remembered oath, he leaned,
Collapsed in bloody vomit, and so died.

So with the bridge's echo welled afresh
My wound above its bandages. I lit

COLUMBUS AT SEVILLE

Down from my horse and o'er the parapet bowed
In sickness of surrender; let my hopes
Unhusk and rain upon the silly stream
That ran ecstatic, with a babbling lip
A-flush for the salt tide, and knew not yet
The smart of that embrace. 'Run, happy fool!
Aspire to make impression on the main,
'Will swallow thee with all thy freshet wave
As kings digest the tributary zeal
Of private men, and so spit forth their names.'

So leaned I, listless to a gallop of hoofs
'Woke distant on the north-east road and swept
Down in a smother of dust. I sprang to the bit,
And backed to let the posting rider past.
But he reined sudden and wheeled. 'Why this will be
—Steady, thou sprawler!—this will be the man,
The Genovese himself! Sir, I have ridden—
The queen commands you back to Santa Fé.

Plague o' this dust!' I looked him up and down:
A little dapper gentleman of the camp,
Flicking with scented kerchief at his coat
Of velvet laced with amber, like a bee's,
And condescending with a silly smile.
And still he smiled; and still I pondered him,
As a father, listening in his closet, hears
The first cry of his first-born child, and turns
To watch an idle bee upon the pane,
And still in the midwife's message hears it buzz.
'The queen commands—' 'So—I believe you, sir':
Then slowlier: 'And I will trust the queen.'
With eyebrows lifted, and a brisk salute,
He shook his rein, dug spur, and started back
A-trot with the answer.
Haste, O bobbing bee!
Be minister of marriage 'twixt two minds,
Two flowers that twine the challenge of their gaze
And know no fleshlier union. Soar, O bee!

Hence from the moat up, up to the lady-flower
Swaying in sunlight high on the palace wall;
Creep in her leaning languid bosom, and there
Do thy close work, whisper, impregnate her
With a secret such as lowlier blossoms breathe
At twilight, one to another, nodding anigh
With petalled nightcaps, while th' eaves-dropping breeze
Steals by the lily-bordered garden beds.
Nay; 'tis a chaster deed thou hast in hand
—To marry mind with mind. Stand but afar
And speak: thou hast a word that not alone
Will breed conception of a queenly thought,
But wake the generations of the world.
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!
Leap with the quickening babe and press your side!
He hath the resurrection in his heel,
Treads underfoot the doom of all his sires,
And springs upon the tight cords wherewithal

In turn they bound each other to the pit.
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!
Enlarge your girdles!—for this conquering babe
Shall westward launch and draw with silver wake
An honourable girdle round the waist
Of Mother Earth, beneath her swelling breasts—
The Old World and the New. O moons of man!
A Spirit moves upon the middle deeps,
And all their odic tides acclaim the Babe!

Back then I rode: but coolly Reason came
With sight of Santa Fé, and plucked my arm—
'Be temperate: for kings have many cares
And thou one vision only. See these walls,
These tented lines; and yonder on the cliff,
At her last gasp, Granada. Tranquilly,
As 'twere on oilèd hinge, the sentinel
Paces her terrace. Evening for her wounds
Hath golden ointment, were they curable.

But at their meat the dusky councillors
Mutter "To-morrow!" and upon the wall
The whisperers surmise. "To-morrow? Ay—
There dawns one only morrow for the Moor!"
But O, what blood! O man, what many blows
Have built that morrow! Christendom redeems
The debt, attains the dream. O give her space,
A kindly space before she dream again!'

Soberly then I cleansed me of the dust
Of travel; stood within the royal tent
With brow composed. And she with brow composed
Questioned my hope as 'twere i' the level round
Of a queen's audience. Cold? I did not know
She had sought to pledge her jewels for that hope!
Only her tone took up the challenge flung
By my obeisance, challenging in turn
Her Court, as who should say, 'Behold this man,
He offers a new heaven, a new earth;

And claims to hold them for us, taking tithe
As Governor, and for his share one-eighth
Of his adventure's profit, with the style
Of Admiral of the Ocean, privilege
As high as our High Admiral's of Castile:
Well worth it, an his promises bear fruit.
I test him at the furthest of his claim—
Go, sir—so much an unbelieving world
Concedes its queen: derisive lets her launch
Fresh hopes forlorn upon its unbelief—
Go, sir, and prove the courage of thy faith.'

And Faith, my son, the substance is of things
Hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
The substance? ay, I trod it! not the deck,
The barren deck whereon my comrades cursed
The wind, the smooth sea running like a stream
Still westward, westward through an empty world.
Nay, while they cursed, my feet already pressed

The yellow sands, waded the rivulets
And long cool grasses of those isles afar.
The evidence? I saw it! not the weed,
The crab, the berried branch, the emperor-fish,
The tropic birds that sang about the mast
As 'twere a sweet-briar bursting into bud
In Seville, in the Andalusian spring.
—Signs and a *sursum corda* for the faint
And faithless. Sudden then a few would crowd
Forward, and point, and hail the dull blue smear
Far on the sky-line. 'News, Lord Admiral!
A land-fall, ho! and luck be with the news!'
—So watch it fade, and curse more bitterly.
Me neither hope nor omen, true or false,
Elated or depressed. Always I bore
The certainty within me, and the seal
Of God upon it, and the face imposed
Of her, my Mistress. Always on the poop,
A man apart, I stood and steered a course

Unerring, by the magnet of my doom.
Others might watch, all eager for the prize—
The thirty annual crowns and velvet coat—
For veritable sight and news of land.
The *Pinta* might outsail, the *Nina* balk
Their Admiral. But still for him reserved
The hour, and for his eyes the blessed light,
The light on Guanahani! Musing there,
Through the first watch, beside the cabin top,
I heard between me and the hornèd moon
A frigate-bird go whistling, and a wind
Caught in the rigging like a woman's sigh:
Whereat I turned——O face! O flash of eyes!
O star of my devotion! all dissolved
Into a spark that danced and disappeared,
And dancing glowed again, as 'twere a torch
Moved in a village street from door to door.
I called the watch. They had not seen: but ran,
Stared, saw—'Land! land!' and 'Praise the Admiral!

Who found us light in darkness? Who but he?'
—More proof? Then rede thee of that bitter gale
Off the Azores, on the homeward road.
The *Nina* drove alone in seas that drowned
Hope and the very heaven. There we cast
Lots who should carry—barefoot, in his sark—
A candle to Our Lady of Guadelupe.
Who drew the lot but I? Again we cast.
And who but I the pilgrim to Moguer,
To Santa Clara? Yea, yet once again
A night of anguish off the Tagus mouth;
Again the lot; again the Admiral!
Me must Our Lady of La Cinta choose:
There was none other. Proofs? I tell thee, son,
There was none other! These men handled ropes,
Starved, hoped, shed tears—mechanical, for me
Their master. As I meted them, they moved.
But Pinzon—who betrayed me once and twice
At Cuba—thought us foundered in the gale,

Nor stayed to search; but made his hope, his shame,
Both doubled by desertion—who, with sail
Piled high as both, let drive the *Pinta* home
To bear the first report and snatch the prize—
I swear I pitied him. How like to mine
His hope, if mine had lacked the single grace
Made his contention impotent! lacking which,
He smote upon a consecrated shield
That on the stroke rang God's authentic 'No!'

Thou knowest how upon a mid-day tide
We drew unto that port of our desire;
To Palos, little Palos, left so long,
After what wonders found! and all the roofs
Rocked, and the mist of faces on the quay
Heaved, and the anchor dropped, and home was home.
Thou knowest how, that moment looking back,
We saw a lean hull creeping past the bar—
The *Pinta*!—never spoken since the Azores!

And Pinzon—traitor, by an hour too late!
Always I pitied him. He had designed
To post to Barcelona with the news:
Now heard the royal mandate, 'Never come
But with the Admiral thou shouldst have served.'
Whereat he turned him to his native town,
To his own house; there on the threshold pushed
By wife and children, mounted to his room,
And turned the key, and knew his hour, and died.

But my reward, how came it?
Proud enough
That hour in Barcelona; the April sky
Shaken with bells and cannon and flame of flags;
The cheers, the craning heads, the blossoms thrown
And kerchiefs from the windows fluttering,
Flock after flock, like doves let forth to greet
The dusty golden pageant—Juan first,
The Pilot, with the Standard of Castile:

The slow brown Indians in their feather cloaks
And paint: the seamen bearing fruit and palms,
Parrots and gold-fish, conchs and turtle-shells,
Lizards on poles, lign-aloes, trays of spice,
And gold in calabashes: last of all
The Admiral. So, they led me to the throne,
Where she and Ferdinand rose, as to a prince,
And hardly would permit me kiss their hands:
But seated me beside them, bade me tell
All our adventures—rarely smiled the Queen—
'Yea, all,' she said. In the great circle's hush,
Beneath the canopy of cloth-of-gold,
I found my voice and spake—'Most Catholic King,
And thou, Star-regent of our enterprise,
Sooner than half were told, this April night
Would shake the planets from her dusky wings
Down-hovering. Yet an hour shall tell enough
To tune all tongues to anthems praising God.'
So for an hour I told the tale; and twice

Paused: but insistent she commanded 'More!'
Leaning with parted lip and kindling cheek,
As might the Carthaginian, had no drought
Of passion parched her dusky throat, have leaned
To Troy's immortal wanderer. Was it then
Came my reward?

Not then, nor ever so.
But long years after, when that dream was grey,
And the heart wise, and fellowship was none
(For 'tis the curse of greatness, to outgrow
All friends and from the lone height long for friends,
And falling, find the friends it left all gone),
—Years afterward, when black was favour's torch
And faith took bribes; when Ferdinand betrayed,
And Bobadilla, High Commissioner,
Foamed at his lunatic height, raged like a beast,
Cast us in chains, shipped us like beeves to Spain—
Then, from the pit of that most brutal fall

A voice commanded 'Break his chains! He shall
In person stand before us, plead his cause.'
Carefully then I dressed me as became
The Admiral of the Ocean. Squire and page
And retinue—I did abate no jot
While the purse bled. A prince, and all a prince,
I passed between the sneering chamber crowd,
The whispering abjects of the ante-rooms,
Into the presence: stood there, cold, erect.
'I am Columbus. I have left my chains
Nailed at my bed's head by the crucifix:
And come to know what further, O my King?'
Then Ferdinand—I saw him bite his lip—
Sat with pink face averted. But the Queen
Rose from her throne, silent—I would have knelt;
Too late! She stretched her hands and, silent yet,
Gazed, and the world fell from us, and we wept—
We two, together . . .

Ah, blessed hands! Ah, blessed woman's hands—
Stretched to undo irreparable wrong!
Yea, the more blest being all impotent!
A queen's I had not touched: but hers met mine
In humbleness across man's common doom,
In sadness and in wisdom beyond pride.
They are cold beside her now, and cannot stir.
Further than I have travelled she hath fared:
But I shall follow. Soon will come the call:
And I shall grip the tiller once again.
The purple night shall heave upon the floor
Mile after mile; the dawn invade the stars,
The stars the dawn—how long? And following down
The moon's long ripple, I shall hear again
The frigate-bird go whistling—see the flash—
The light on Guanahani! Salvador!
Let thy Cross flame upon me in that star,
And from that Cross outstretch *her* sainted hands!

My son, they tell me that the Queen is gone.
I trust she rests in glory, free from all
The cares of this rough world. She was my friend:
And I shall find it harder now to treat
With Ferdinand. He fends me off with words.
I thought that last petition ill prepared;
And have an ampler one; drawn up and signed
To-day, or yesterday—who knows? The blinds
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor.

THE WHITE MOTH

If a leaf rustled, she would start:
And yet she died a year ago.
How had so frail a thing the heart
To journey where she trembled so?
And do they turn and turn in fright,
Those little feet, in so much night?

The light above the poet's head
Streamed on the pane and on the cloth,
And twice and thrice there buffeted
On the black pane a white-winged moth:
'Twas Annie's soul that beat outside
And 'Open! open! open!' cried:

'I could not find the way to God:
  There were too many flaming suns
For signposts, and the fearful road
  Led over wastes where millions
Of tangled comets hissed and burned—
  I was bewildered and I turned.

'Oh, it was easy then! I knew
  Your window and no star beside.
Look up, and take me back to you!'
  —He rose and thrust the window wide.
'Twas but because his head was hot
  With rhyming: for he heard her not.

But poets polishing a phrase
  Show anger over trivial things;
And as she blundered in the blaze
  Towards him, on ecstatic wings,
He raised a hand and smote her dead;
  Then wrote, '*That I had died instead!*'

PREMONITION

She sat upon the cottage stair,—
A tender child of three,
And washed and dressed with wisest care
The doll upon her knee.

And we, who guessed not why there grew
In Annie's baby eyes
That little clouding of the blue,
That shade of awed surmise,

Remembered, in the darkened room,
Where yesterday we took
Our Annie's new-born babe, on whom
Her eyes might never look.

HELFORD RIVER

SONG

Helford River, Helford River,
  Blessed may ye be!
We sailed up Helford River
  By Durgan from the sea.

O to hear the hawser chain
  Rattle by the ferry there!
Dear, and shall we come again
    By Bosahan,
By wood and water fair?

All the wood to ransack,
  All the wave explore—
Moon on Calamansack,
  Ripple on the shore.

HELFORD RIVER

—Laid asleep and dreaming
On our cabin beds;
Helford River streaming
By two happy heads;

—Helford River, streaming
By Durgan to the sea,
Much have we been dreaming
Since we dreamed by thee.

Dear, and shall we dream again
The one dream there?
All may go if that remain
By Bosahan,
And the old face wear!

'TO THE LAND WHERE YE GO . . .

To the land where ye go
  Ye may not beckon me;
In the ranks ye shall know
  Ye shall not reckon me.
On the earth ye did move
As deep below as high above
    All your surroundings.
I cast a plummet in your love
    And found no soundings.

Pools of heaven were your eyes;
  Their deeps rejected not
One whom wide Paradise
  Pitied, reflected not.

'TO THE LAND WHERE YE GO . . . '

Was it time lost to lean
My longing lip toward the clean
    Well-springs of healing,
Surprise the soul mine might have been,
    And ponder, kneeling?

TO BEARERS

MAIDS, carry her forth—your dead,
  Your pale young queen;
Two at her feet, two at her head,
  And four between.—
Not as we wanted it,
But as God granted it.

Not now to the swinging chime,
  To the organ swell,
Keep we the rank, treading in time—
  But one dull bell.
Open the gates for her!
The Bridegroom waits for her.

TO BEARERS

We never had dreamed it so :
  But she—she knew ;
Walking aloof, placid of brow
  Her short life through
Scornful, in surety
Guarding her purity.

Buds born for the bridal path
  Cover her breast :
Babes of the dream now that she hath
  Sleep in her rest.
Our peace above her let
Fall for her coverlet.

THE GENTLE SAVAGE

Go down, my Soul, unto the river;
The day is done, the mountain mute;
Thou hast a message to deliver—
Why loiterest yet irresolute?
See, on the farther bank,
The lamp-light winking
Across the city, cooling there her flank
Like a beast drinking.

Down by the mill, the ghostly miller
May see a twilit phantom steal
And loose an arrow duskier, shriller,
Than flies the bat about his wheel.

Arrow of secret call!
Call to her only
Who, at her window on the city wall,
Waiteth so lonely.

O mother, in thy royal chamber
How barest thou such a son as I?
Thou, cased at heart with pearl and amber,
With starch and stiff embroidery:
I, the brown Ishmaelite—
I, whom the starry
Summits behold at loose upon the night
After my quarry?

Small mother mine, amid thy roses
Thy heart sings all the day content.
The curtained wall that round thee closes
Reminds not of imprisonment.

I, on the mountain-tops
All the day roaming,
Recall thee never till a shadow drops
From the rook, homing.

That call renews our blood's confusion—
Thy babe leaps naked back to thee:
Thy soul remembers her seclusion,
And mine abhors her liberty.
Suppliant I nestle then
To thee the stronger,
And seek my strength of thee, mother of men,
Mere queen no longer.

A moment, and our wiser senses
Restore to each the life apart.
Yet, as the violet condenses
All Venus in one dewy heart,

THE GENTLE SAVAGE

So all the night I hear
Thy lids distilling
A love that holds in every purple tear
Love's planet thrilling.

THE PLANTED HEEL.

By Talland Church as I did go,
I passed my kindred all in a row;

Straight and silent there by the spade
Each in his narrow chamber laid.

While I passed, each kinsman's clay
Stole some virtue of mine away:

Till my shoes on the muddy road
Left not a print, so light they trod.

Back I went to the Bearer's Lane,
Begged the dead for my own again.

Answered the eldest one of my line—
'Thy heart was no one's heart but mine.'

The second claimed my working skill,
The third my wit, the fourth my will:

The fifth one said, 'Thy feet I gave;
But want no fleetness here in the grave.'

'For feet a man need have no care,
If they no weight of his own may bear.

'If I own naught by separate birth,
What binds my heel e'en now to the earth?'

The dead together answered back—
'Naught but the wealth in thy knapsack.'

'Nay, then,' said I, 'that's quick to unload':
And strewed my few pence out on the road.

'O kinsmen, now be quick, resume
Each rag of me to its rightful tomb!'

The dead were silent then for a space.
Still I stood upright in my place.

Said one, 'Some strength he will yet conceal.'
'Belike 'tis pride of a planted heel?'

'Man has but one perduring pride:
Of knowledge alone he is justified.

'Lie down, lie down by us in the sod:
Thou shalt be wise in the ways of God.'

'Nay, so I stand upright in the dust,
I'll take God's purposes all on trust

'An inch of heel for a yard of spine,
So give me again the goods that are mine!'

THE PLANTED HEEL

I planted my heel by their headstones,
And wrestled an hour with my kinsmen's bones.

I shook their dust thrice into a sieve,
And gathered all that they had to give.

I winnowed knowledge out of the heap:
'Take it,' I said, 'to warm your sleep.'

I cast their knowledge back on the sod,
And went on my journey, praising God.

Of all their knowledge I thought me rid:
But one little grain in my pack had hid.

Now, as I go, myself I tell—
'On a planted heel man wrestles well.'

But that little grain keeps whispering me—
'Better, perhaps, on a planted knee.'

IA'S SONG

Long before day I left my father's cottage,
I went by the tamarisks upon the hedges by the sea,
Seeking my lovely one, my comforter, before the morning.

My brothers three lie drowned by Dolor Oogo.
They call in the night: 'Little sister, when is the wedding?
It is cold waiting, and thou a drudge in our father's cottage.'

Now must I go and whisper them 'Not yet'—
Not yet; but the thyme of the hedge kisses my naked foot—
So will he kiss me soon, and comfort me, my pretty lover.

Then will I kneel by him, and he shall bandage
The wounds of the brambles, and I, kneeling beside
him,
Softly, my arm holding his waist, will kiss him—ah,
when?

A FIDDLER'S VALENTINE

Pretty player, from thy strings
Little whispers take them wings—
  Take them wings and hie to me!
In my hollow heart they dwell
Swinging it as 'twere a bell
  Ding-a-ding inside o' me.
Hand to play and heart to ring—
Together might they make a spring
On earth beyond imagining:
  But nay, and nay—
  For now my love's denied to me.
Therefore, dear, lay down thy fiddle,
Clip me once around the middle,
  Kiss, and say good-bye to me!

THE KERCHIEF

When I 'gan to know thee, dear,
Thy faults I did espy;
And 'Sure this is a blemish here,
And that's a blot,' said I.

But from that hour I did resign
My judgment to my fate,
Thou art no more than only mine
To love and vindicate.

The kerchief that thou gav'st I wear
Upon mine eyelids bound,
And every man I meet I dare
To find the faults I found.

LOVE SEQUESTERED

Though in her grey unclouded eyes
No cheat abode, nor compromise,
But truth in clearest outline shone,
And sin from honour stood alone;

Yet to be with her was to walk
A faëry shore, and list the talk
Of dropping streams, and nightingales,
And gods dissolved in inland vales.

And though we loved and lived remote,
Nor feat achieved deserving note,
Each trivial step was sanctified
In that we took it side by side.

THE LEAST OF THESE

'LORD, in Thy Courts
Are seats so green bestow'd,
As there resorts
Along the dusty road
A cavalcade,—King, Bishop, Knight, and Judge:
And though I toil behind and meanly trudge,
Let me, too, lie upon that pleasant sward,
For I am weary, Lord.

'Christ, at Thy board
Are wines and dishes drest
That do afford
Contentment to the best.

And though with Poverty my bed hath been
These many years, and my refreshment lean,
With plenty now at last my soul acquaint,
Dear Master, for I faint.'

But through the grille,
'Where is thy Robe?' said He
'Wouldst eat thy fill,
Yet shirk civility?'
'My Robe, alas! There was a little child
That shivered by the road——' Swiftly God smiled:
'I was that Child,' said He, and raised the pin;
'Dear friend, enter thou in!'

CAROL

FLING out, fling out your windows wide!
I bring you joy this Christmas-tide:
To-day is born in Bethlehem
A son of royal David's stem:
Then sing and rest you satisfied—
In excelsis gloria!

'Where is the royal Babe arrayed?'
Lo! He is in a manger laid;
The Lord of life an ox's guest—
But warm He lies on Mary's breast?
Then sing and rest you undismayed.

'How may we find His manger-bed?'
  There shines a star above His head;
And choirs of viewless Cherubin
Shall guide you to that humble inn:
  Then sing and rest you comforted.

'And is it He that should be sent?'
  Three kings came from the Orient
A-riding with the tokens three
From Ind, Cathay, and Arabye:
  Then sing and rest you confident.

'What bringeth He, this new-born King?'
  Lo! all good gifts there are to bring.
'Tis He shall turn your tears to mirth,
And send goodwill and peace on earth:
  Then kneel, and rest you worshipping—
In excelsis gloria!

CHILD'S CAROL

Naked boy, brown boy,
In the snow deep,
Piping, carolling
Folks out of sleep ;
Little shoes, thin shoes,
All so wet and worn—
But I bring the merry news
—Christ is born !

Rise, pretty mistress !
Don a gay silk ;
Give me for my good news
Bread and new milk.

Joy, joy in Jewry,
  This very morn!
Far and far I carry it
  —Christ is born!

Back, back in Bethl'em,
  By the moon still,
There I saw a shepherd
  Sitting on a hill:
'Boy,' said he, 'bonny boy,
  Take you this horn,
Wend you now and wind it,
  —Christ is born!

And whenever people
  Hear the merry blast,
Bells in every steeple,
  Flags on every mast,

CHILD'S CAROL

Holy boughs and holly
  Adore and adorn,
Far and far and jubilant
  —Christ is born!

Therefore I would have you
  People comprehend
Christ is born in Bethl'em
  For to be your friend:
For to bear the agony,
  For to wear the thorn,
For to die on Calvary,
  —Christ is born!

HOLY INNOCENTS

Us Herod slew,
Willing to slay the infant Christ, our Lord.
But from the sword
Our tender life in globes of lighted dew
Trickled and twinkling ran
Before Him to the waste Egyptian,
Gilding His way like glow-worms on the sward.

Now in His house
He draweth us to deck the Christmas fir
From chest of myrrh;
Whom as Aunt Mary bindeth on the boughs,
Her eyes drop happy rain
For sorrow past—and lo! we live again
As babies trembling in the tears of her.

JETSOM

WHERE Gerennius' beacon stands
High above Pendower sands;
Where, about the windy Nare,
Foxes breed and falcons pair;
Where the gannet dries a wing
Wet with fishy harvesting,
And the cormorants resort,
Flapping slowly from their sport
With the fat Atlantic shoal,
Homeward to Tregeagle's Hole—
Walking there, the other day,
In a bight within a bay,
I espied amid the rocks,
Bruised and jammed, the daintiest box
That the waves had flung and left

High upon an ivied cleft.
Striped it was with white and red,
Satin-lined and carpeted,
Hung with bells, and shaped withal
Like the queer, fantastical
Chinese temples you 'll have seen
Pictured upon white Nankin,
Where, assembled in effective
Head-dresses and odd perspective,
Tiny dames and mandarins
Expiate their egg-shell sins
By reclining on their drumsticks,
Waving fans and burning gum-sticks.
Land of poppy and pekoe !
Could thy sacred artists know—
Could they possibly conjecture
How we use their architecture,
Ousting the indignant Joss
For a pampered Flirt or Floss,

JETSOM

Poodle, Blenheim, Skye, Maltese,
Lapped in purple and proud ease—
They might read their god's reproof
Here on blistered wall and roof,
Scaling lacquer, dinted bells,
Floor befouled of weed and shells,
Where, as erst the tabid Curse
Brooded over Pelops' hearse,
Squats the sea-cow, keeping house,
Sibylline, gelatinous.
Where is Carlo? Tell, O tell,
Echo, from this fluted shell,
In whose concave ear the tides
Murmur what the main confides
Of his compassed treacheries!
What of Carlo? Did the breeze
Madden to a gale while he,
Curled and cushioned cosily,
Mixed in dreams its angry breathings

With the tinkle of the tea-things
In his mistress' cabin laid?
—Nor dyspeptic, nor dismayed,
Drowning in a gentle snore
All the menace of the shore
Thundered from the surf a-lee
Near and nearer horribly,—
Scamper of affrighted feet,
Voices cursing sail and sheet,
While the tall ship shook in irons—
All the peril that environs
Vessels 'twixt the wind and rock
Clawing—driving? Did the shock,
As the sunk reef split her back,
First arouse him? Did the crack
Widen swiftly and deposit
Him in homeless night?
Or was it,
Not when wave or wind assailed,

But in waters dumb and veiled,
That a looming shape uprist
Sudden from the channel mist,
And with crashing, rending bows
Woke him, in his padded house,
To a world of altered features?
Were these panic-ridden creatures
They who, but an hour agone,
Ran with biscuit, ran with bone,
Ran with meats in lordly dishes,
To prevent his lordly wishes?
But an hour agone! And now how
Vain his once compelling bow-wow!
Little dogs are highly treasured,
Petted, patted, pampered, pleasured:
But when ships go down in fogs,
No one thinks of little dogs.

Ah, but how dost fare, I wonder,

Now thine Argo splits asunder,
Pouring on the wasteful sea
All her precious bales, and thee?
Little use is now to rave,
Calling god or saint to save;
Little use, if choked with salt, a
Prayer to holy John of Malta.
Patron John, he hears thee not.
Or, perchance, in dusky grot
Pale Persephone, repining
For the fields that still are shining,
Shining in her sleepless brain,
Calling, 'Back! come back again!'
Fain of playmate, fain of pet—
Any drug to slay regret,—
Hath from hell upcast an eye
On thy fatal symmetry,
And beguiled her sooty lord
With his brother to accord

For this black betrayal. Else
Nereus in his car of shells
Long ago had cleft the waters
With his natatory daughters
To the rescue: or Poseidon
Sent a fish for thee to ride on—
Such a steed as erst Arion
Reached the mainland high and dry on.
Steed appeareth none, nor pilot!
Little dog, if it be thy lot
To essay the dismal track
Where Odysseus half hung back,
How wilt thou conciliate
That grim mastiff by the gate?
Sure 'twill puzzle thee to fawn
On his muzzles three that yawn
Antrous; or to find, poor dunce,
Grace in his six eyes at once—
Those red eyes of Cerberus.

Daughters of Oceanus,
Save our darling from this hap!
Arethusa, spread thy lap,
Catch him, and with pinky hands
Bear him to the coral sands,
Where thy sisters sit in school
Carding the Milesian wool:—
Clio, Spio, Beroe,
Opis and Phyllodoce,—
Pass by these, and also pass
Yellow-haired Lycorias;
Pass Ligea, shrill of song—
All the dear surrounding throng;
Lay him at Cyrene's feet
There, where all the rivers meet:
In their waters crystalline
Bathe him clean of weed and brine,
Comb him, wipe his amber eyes,
Then to Zeus who rules the skies

Call, assembling in a round
Every fish that can be found—
Whale and merman, lobster, cod,
Tittlebat and demigod:—
'Lord of all the Universe,
We, thy finny pensioners,
Sue thee for the little life
Hurried hence by Hades' wife.
Sooner than she call him her dog,
Change, O change him to a mer-dog!
Re-inspire the vital spark;
Bid him wag his tail and bark;
Bark for joy to wag a tail
Bright with many a flashing scale;
Bid his locks refulgent twine,
Hyacinthe, hyaline;
Bid him gambol, bid him follow
Blithely to the mermen's 'halloa!'
When they call the deep-sea calves

Home with wreathèd univalves.
Softly shall he sleep to-night,
Curled on couch of stalagmite,
Soft and sound, and scarcely moister
Than the shell-protected oyster.
Grant us this, Omnipotent,
And to Hera shall be sent
One black pearl, but of a size
That shall turn her rivals' eyes
Greener than the greenest snake
Fed in meadow-grass, and make
All Olympus run agog—
Grant for this our darling dog!'

Musing thus, the other day,
In a bight within a bay,
I 'd a sudden thought that yet some
Purpose for this piece of jetsom
Might be found; and straight supplied it.

On the turf I knelt beside it,
Disengaged it from the boulders,
Hoisted it upon my shoulders,
Bore it home, and, with a few
Tin-tacks and a pot of glue,
Mended it, affixed a ledge;
Set it by the elder-hedge;
And in May, with horn and kettle
Coax'd a swarm of bees to settle.
Here around me now they hum;
And in Autumn should you come
Westward to my Cornish home,
There 'll be honey in the comb—
Honey that, with clotted cream
(Though I win not your esteem
As a bard), will prove me wise,
In that, of the double prize
Sent by Hermes from the sea, I 've
Sold the song and kept the bee-hive.

THE BIG REVIEW

(*To be sung to a pipe and drum quick-step*)

WHEN I went up, a raw recruit,
To Bodmin town from Scorrier,
Our Colonel wore a gold-laced suit
Like a warrior all ablaze :
Our Colonel held a Big Review,
With knapsack, pouch, and bagginet,
An' the Colonel's daughter drove thereto
In a wagginet drawn by bays.

THE BIG REVIEW

The drums they beat, the trumpets blowed,
The guns went off impartial;
But of all the regiment Private Coad
In a martial way did best.
'Stand forth, stand forth, thou hero bold!
To you the rest be secon'-rate:
'Tis you shall wear this clasp of gold
For to decorate your broad chest!—

O where, O where 's my best recruit
That e'er I paid a shillin' for?'
—But all the regiment stuck there mute,
Unwillin' for to explain;
Till forth I steps, and gives a cough,
And answers him so dutiful—
'Look, Colonel, dear, he 's gallopin' off
With your beautiful daughter Jane!'

'Of all the plans that e'er I've known,
Says he, 'I do call that a plan
To bring my hairs in sorrow down
With a rataplan to the grave!
Form up, form up, each galliant blade,
Form up, my sons of Waterloo!
I ain't goin' to spoil my Big Parade
For a mortal who can't behave!'

L'ENVOI

Go little book, and this let be thy prayer—
  That critics may consider well, and take
  Thee for thine own and not the writer's sake,
But have of him, apart from thee, no care.

Much have I tried and little have achieved—
  Much have myself dissatisfied with prose,
  Which yet I aimed to better; and, God knows,
Have more myself than any critic grieved.

But thou art separate. Youngling of my heart
  I cannot judge thee, whether good or bad.
  In doubt thou wast begotten, dearest lad,
And still in doubt I kept thee long apart.

Now at the door, with ribbons in thy cap,
Doubt not, but draw from these parental eyes
A double courage for the enterprise.
Go, slender youth : God send thee gentle hap !

NOTES

Page 27.—Where the Avon winds under Bredon Hill in Worcestershire, and just where the Malverns come into view, a bridge of native sandstone crosses between the villages of Eckington and Defford. Its parapet is scored with many deep grooves and notches, worn in the stone by the tow-ropes of departed barges. The river from Tewkesbury to Stratford was made navigable in 1637 by Mr. William Sandys, of Fladbury, 'at his own proper cost.' But railways have ruined waterways: the locks above Evesham have fallen into decay, while those below have lost their custom, and Stratford no longer (in the words of the Rev. Richard Jago, author of *Edge-hill*)—

> 'her spacious magazines unfolds,
> And hails th' unwieldy barge from western shores
> With foreign dainties fraught, or native ore
> Of pitchy hue, to pile the fuel'd grate,
> In woolly stores or husky grain repay'd.'

Page 43, lines 3, 4.—'And let the counsel of thine own heart stand; for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it.

'For a man's mind is sometime wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in an high tower.'—ECCLESIASTICUS, xxxvii. 13, 14.

Page 49, line 3.—'Pinos bridge.' There is a tradition that Columbus, broken by the indifference of the Spanish Court, had started to seek aid in England for his project, but was overtaken on the bridge of Pinos by a messenger from Isabella, bearing a fresh promise of assistance. Being urged by the messenger to return to Santa Fé, he pondered and replied, 'I will take the word of the noble queen.'

Page 50, lines 4 and following.—'Levantine traders. . . .' See *The Career of Columbus*, by Mr. Charles I. Elton (1892), p. 15.

Page 56, line 16.—'Be minister of marriage. . . .' I hope the critic will pardon my having put into the mouth of Columbus this anticipation of a quite modern discovery.

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